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**Answers to Questions Raised at PIP Meeting Related to Parker Street Waste Site**  
**At Keith Middle School, New Bedford on April 14, 2010**

**1. How is MassDPH gathering the data about the number/type of cancers at the high school?**

MDPH has been gathering data about the occurrence of cancer at the high school in a number of different ways. Staff from the Community Assessment Program (CAP) within the Bureau of Environmental Health (BEH) accompanied staff from the BEH Indoor Air Quality Program to the high school during their building inspections to meet with and listen to the health concerns of staff, including cancer concerns. In addition, two lists of names of former high school staff and students who have been diagnosed with cancer were provided to MDPH by the local New Bedford health department and via an email from CLEAN. Diagnoses reported to MDPH are being confirmed using data available from the MDPH Massachusetts Cancer Registry (MCR) and Registry of Vital Records and Statistics.

In addition to a review of reported cancer diagnoses in the high school, CAP is also conducting a review of cancer incidence in the neighborhoods in closest proximity to the high school. Individuals with a diagnosis of cancer are reported to the MCR based on their residence at diagnosis; therefore CAP is evaluating the incidence of specific types of cancer among residents who live in the census tract where the Parker Street Waste Site is located as well as in four adjacent census tracts. Unfortunately, information on place of work is not reported to the MCR.

Both of these evaluations will be summarized in reports that will be shared with the area residents and school staff, respectively, once they are completed.

**2. I worked at the old Keith, spent many hours on Andrea McCoy field with my daughter while they played soccer for years, worked at the new Keith and currently work at NBHS, and I have fought breast cancer along with some of my female colleagues. Why haven't I or any of the women I work with been included in any medical samplings? What was the process used to alert people to participate in the study? Why wasn't the school department told to contact all the employees on these "hot" sites?**

MDPH made significant efforts to inform school staff as well as neighbors of the Parker Street Waste Site of the availability of participating in an exposure assessment interview which could

then lead to an analysis of blood serum for PCBs. When this initiative first began, MDPH worked to spread the word through radio interviews in New Bedford (on GLOBO, 97.3FM) and press releases/interviews (through the New Bedford Standard Times). We also prepared notices for the schools. It is our understanding that school officials posted DPH's notices in the teachers' lounges at the high school and Keith Middle School as well as made announcements to staff. MDPH provided updates to the New Bedford Teachers' Union and attended a public meeting at the Keith Middle School to outline plans for the interviews and serum testing.

3. If results from blood tests were ready in February, why has it taken so long to make them available?

The MDPH state laboratory provided the laboratory data to the BEH at the end of February. Once CAP received the results for the 91 individuals who chose to participate in the serum testing program, each individual's lab and interview data were evaluated to provide an interpretation of the information specific to each person. For each individual, BEH must analyze their results and compare them to the latest national survey data, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) data, which represents a random sample of the U.S. population. As mentioned, BEH reviewed the information provided by each participant during their exposure assessment interview when questions were asked about potential sources of exposure to PCBs. An individualized letter is being prepared for each participant. BEH anticipates mailing these letters to participants in late April/early May.

4. What is the responsibility of the MassDPH at this site? Is MassDPH coordinating with the city Health Dept.?

Although MDPH does not have regulatory authority at the Parker Street Waste Site, MDPH is committed to helping address people's concerns in a number of ways. MDPH/BEH interviewed 124 concerned individuals and conducted serum PCB testing for those 91 individuals who chose to participate in the serum testing program. In addition, BEH is evaluating the incidence of cancer in the high school as well as in five census tracts containing and surrounding the Parker Street Waste Site. The BEH Indoor Air Quality Program has inspected the high school through multiple site visits and is evaluating environmental conditions in the building.

BEH has been working closely with the New Bedford Health Department over the last few years on all of these activities. The New Bedford Health Department helped BEH secure space at the Normandin Middle School to conduct the exposure assessment interviews and the majority of the blood draws for the serum PCB testing occurred at the New Bedford Health Department. The Health Director was also instrumental in securing the services of the MDPH/IAQ Program to inspect the high school as well as other schools within the school system.

5. Did DPH provide information to residents in multiple languages about the health study? Were letters dropped off?

MDPH did participate in an interview on New Bedford's Portuguese radio station (GLOBO 97.3 FM) before the start of the exposure assessment interviews, to publicize the interviews and serum PCB testing opportunity. Also, OJornal, a Portuguese-language paper, published an article on MDPH's activities including contact information for those interested in participating. At a PIP meeting before the interviews began, an interpreter was present for Portuguese-speaking residents. MDPH has used a translator, when necessary, for all correspondence to Portuguese-speaking participants.

6. Why has MassDPH done no urine, hair, or fecal testing for metals (specifically arsenic and lead) on children who have participated in sport activities on Walsh Field?

MDPH has a cooperative agreement with the federal health agency, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), to coordinate work in Massachusetts involving hazardous waste sites. In response to a petition request from Wasted Away (now CLEAN), ATSDR is currently conducting a public health assessment (PHA) of the Parker Street Waste Site, including Walsh Field. In this assessment, ATSDR is reviewing the environmental sampling data from the site, evaluating the ways by which people may come into contact with contamination at the site, and then evaluating the potential for adverse health effects from exposures. MDPH feels that a determination regarding the need for and nature of the type of health evaluation involving biomonitoring (for example, testing for metals in people) should be based on the findings of the public health assessment.

7. Will DPH only issue letters to individuals or will they also issue a summary document when the PCB blood serum test results are released?

MDPH will mail confidential letters to individuals with their own PCB serum results. In addition, MDPH will be preparing a summary report on the results of the participants as a group. This summary report will be made available to the public and a meeting to review the information will likely be scheduled in the early summer.

8. Explain the role of ATSDR for entire site. What is a health consultation? Who is the point of contact/lead on this effort at ATSDR?

Please see the response to question 6. The point of contact at ATSDR is Andy Dudley who is a health assessor in ATSDR's Atlanta office.